

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 LISBON 04341 081655Z

70

ACTION EUR-10

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R 081420Z OCT 74

FM AMEMBASSY LISBON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0713

INFO AMCONSUL LOURENCO MARQUES

AMCONSUL LUANDA

AMCONSUL OPORTO

AMCONSUL PONTA DELGADA

AMEMBASSY MADRID

C O N F I D E N T I A L LISBON 4341

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PO

SUBJ: SOCIALIST PARTY UNDER INCREASING PRESSURE TO
MOVE LEFT

REF: LISBON A-95

SUMMARY: THE RECENT ABORTIVE COUP ATTEMPT BY SPINOLA AND THE FAR RIGHT HAS EMBOLDENED THE LEFT WING OF THE SOCIALIST PARTY AND MADE IT INCREASINGLY DIFFICULT FOR THE MODERATES TO RESIST THE EMBRACE OF UNITY WITH THE COMMUNISTS. INDICATIONS ARE THAT THE SOCIALISTS ARE UNDERGOING AN INTERNAL DIVISION OVER THEIR FUTURE STRATEGY AND ALLIANCE POLICY, WITH THE POSSIBILITY NOT RULED OUT THAT THE SOARES FACTION WILL LOSE. END SUMMARY.

1. AS A RESULT OF THE RECENT ABORTIVE COUP ATTEMPT BY PRESIDENT SPINOLA, AND THE ALLEGED ATTEMPT BY FAR RIGHTISTS TO ASSASSINATE PRIME MINISTER GONCALVES AND OTHERS, THE PORTUGUESE SOCIALIST PARTY FINDS ITSELF INCREASINGLY PRESSURED TO ADOPT MORE RADICAL POSITIONS THAN IN THE PAST, AND TO MORE FIRMLY EMBRACE THE COMMUNIST PARTY. THE SOURCE OF THIS PRESSURE ON THE PARTY IS BOTH
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 LISBON 04341 081655Z

INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL.

2. EXTERNALLY, THE COMMUNIST PARTY AND THE MDP/CDE ARE INDIRECTLY ACCUSING THE SOCIALIST PARTY OF HAVING UNKNOWINGLY AIDED THE REACTIONARIES BY WITHDRAWING FROM THE MDP/CDE, THEREBY WEAKENING THE UNITY OF THE PROGRESSIVE FORCES. ATTACKS BY THE SOCIALISTS ON THE MDP AND THE PCP AT A TIME WHEN THE REACTIONARIES WERE PLANNING A COUP IS PORTRAYED BY THE COMMUNISTS AS HAVING EMBOLDENED THE RIGHT AND SPURRED ON ITS ACTIVITIES. THE COMMUNISTS HOPE TO USE THIS ARGUMENT TO PRESSURE THE SOCIALISTS INTO REJOINING THE MDP, AND TO CONVINCE THEM THAT ONLY THROUGH ELECTORAL AND TACTICAL UNITY CAN THEY RESIST FUTURE ATTACKS FROM THE RIGHT.

3. INTERNALLY THERE ARE SIGNS THAT THE SOCIALISTS ARE EXPERIENCING FACTIONAL DISPUTES, PRINCIPALLY OVER WHAT STRATEGY TO ADOPT REGARDING THE PCP AND THE MDP, AND PERHAPS OVER OTHER ISSUES AS WELL. VICTOR CUNHA REGO, A SOCIALIST PARTY LEADER WHO IS CLOSE TO MARIO SOARES AND APPARENTLY IN THE MODERATE WING OF THE PARTY TOLD AN EMBOFF OCTOBER 1 THAT THE PARTY WAS IN THE MIDST OF A SERIOUS CRISIS, WITH THE VOCAL, ACTIVE, AND WELL-PLACED MEMBERS OF THE PARTY'S MINORITY LEFT WING IN AN ADVANTAGEOUS POSITION AS A RESULT OF THE RECENT CRISIS. REGO SAID THAT THE "COMMUNISTS" ON THE LEFT SIDE OF THE SOCIALIST PARTY ARE SEEKING TO TAKE OVER LEADERSHIP OF THE PARTY FROM MARIOS SOARES AND TURN THE PARTY INTO, IN EFFECT, A COMMUNIST-FRONT ORGANIZATION ALONG THE LINES OF THE MDP/CDE. REGO DID NOT REVEAL THE NAMES OF THE LEADERS OF THE LEFT WING OF THE PARTY, BUT DID MENTION THAT MARIO SOTTOMAYOR CARDIA FORMED PART OF THE GROUP.

4. REGO INDICATED THAT HE WOULD NOT BE SURPRISED IF, WITHIN THREE OR FOUR MONTHS, MARIO SOARES LEFT THE SOCIALIST PARTY AND SOUGHT AN INDEPDEPENDENT POLITICAL POSITION.(COMMENT: THE SOCIALIST PARTY IS SCHEDULED TO HOLD ITS CONGRESS THE LAST HALF OF DECEMBER, AND ELECTIONS TO FILL THE 49-MAN CENTRAL COMMITTEE, THE 14-MAN POLITICAL COMMITTEE, AND THE 9-MAN SECRETARIAT WILL BE HELD AT THAT TIME.) ASKED IF MARIO SOARES WOULD JOIN SOME OTHER EXISTING POLITICAL GROUPING, REGO INDICATED THAT HE WOULD BE MORE INCLINED TO ADOPT A PURELY INDEPENDENT ROLE.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 LISBON 04341 081655Z

5. DURING THE RECENT CRISIS (WHEN MARIO SOARES WAS OUT OF THE COUNTRY), ELEMENTS OF THE SOCIALIST PARTY JOINED FORCES WITH COMMUNISTS AND MDP/CDE AT THE CHECKPOINTS SET UP ON MAJOR ARTERIES THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY, AND ONCE AGAIN (AFTER A PERIOD OF CLOSE TO A MONTH IN WHICH THEY HAD SHIED AWAY FROM PARTICIPATING IN COMMUNIST-SPONSORED ACTIVITIES) BEGAN APPEARING AT RALLIES AND DEMONSTRATIONS WITH THE COMMUNISTS. THE

CATHOLIC CURRENT OF THE SOCIALIST PARTY LED BY MANUEL SERRA (MOVIMENTO SOCIALIST POPULAR) HAS ALSO BEGUN ASSOCIATING MORE CLOSELY WITH THE RADICAL MARXIST GROUPS LIKE LUAR AND MES IN RECENT DAYS. THE THREE GROUPS ISSUED A JOINT COMMUNIQUE A FEW DAYS AGO ANALYZING THE ABORTIVE RIGHT WING COUP ATTEMPT AND SUGGESTING THAT PROGRESSIVE FORCES TAKE CERTAIN (UNSPECIFIED) MEASURES TO PREVENT FUTURE RIGHT WING ATTEMPTS TO SEIZE POWER.

6. THE ABILITY OF THE PARTY TO KEEP ITS MEMBER IN LINE HAS BEEN QUESTIONED BY ONE MEMBER OF THE PPD WHO ALLEGES THAT THE PARTY MILITANTS IN AT LEAST ONE AREA (SETUBAL) REFUSED TO OBEY CENTRAL DIRECTIVES DURING THE RECENT CRISIS AND PHYSICALLY ASSAULTED RIGHT WING PARTY HEADQUARTERS AND SOME "FASCISTS," ACTIVITIES WHICH THE RANK AND FILE WERE UNDER INSTRUCTIONS TO REFRAIN FROM DOING.

7. COMMENT: WE BELIEVE THAT ONE OF THE TOP PRIORITIES OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY IN THE MONTHS TO COME WILL BE TO INFILTRATE AND TAKE OVER LEADERSHIP OF THE SOCIALIST PARTY. AT BEST IT WOULD LIKE TO MAKE THE PARTY INTO THE EQUIVALENT OF A PCP-DOMINATED FRONT GROUP, WITH WHICH IT WOULD MAKE AN ELECTORAL ALLIANCE IN ORDER TO SUBSTANTIALLY INCREASE ITS VOTE IN THE NEXT ELECTIONS. (IN ADDITION THE MDP/CDE WOULD RUN CANDIDATES IN THE MORE CONSERVATIVE RURAL AREAS AND ALSO SERVE AS A PCP FRONT.) AT THE LEAST, THE COMMUNISTS WOULD LIKE TO ATTRACT MILITANTS FROM THE SOCIALISTS, WEAKEN THE SOCIALISTS INTERNALLY, AND PREVENT THEM FROM FORMING AN ALLIANCE WITH THE PPD TO THE SOCIALISTS' RIGHT.

8. WHETHER THE SOCIALISTS ARE ABLE TO RESIST THESE PCP PRESSURES DEPENDS ON MANY UNPREDICTABLE FACTORS, INCLUDING THE BEHAVIOR OF THE FAR RIGHT. WERE THE FAR RIGHT TO GO UNDERGROUND AS SOME PREDICT AND BEGIN SABOTAGE AND PHYSICAL ASSAULTS ON

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 LISBON 04341 081655Z

LEFTIST MILITANTS, THE SOCIALIST ABILITY TO STAY OUT OF BED WITH THE COMMUNISTS WOULD BE SIGNIFICANTLY WEAKENED, AS BOTH PARTIES WOULD FEEL THE NECESSITY TO JOIN TOGETHER FOR MUTUAL DEFENSE.
SCOTT

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